New York Theatre Critics' Reviews 1952

Volume XIII, Number 7 • Rachel W. Coffin, *Editor* • Week of March 24, 1952

1952 PRODUCTIONS
Premieres in Other Years

Original Reviews Appeared In These Volumes

1951 Vol.

Stage Play	*Page*
*Antony and Cleopatra	132
Bagels and Yox	238
*Caesar and Cleopatra	135
*Constant Wife (The)	149
*Fourposter (The)	190
*Gigi	159
Glad Tidings	212
*I Am a Camera	156
*King and I (The)	304
Legend of Lovers	125
Lo and Behold!	143
*Moon Is Blue (The)	322
Nina	152
Number (The)	186
*Paint Your Wagon	172
*Point of No Return	140
Remains To Be Seen	223
Saint Joan	220
*Stalag 17	274
*Top Banana	180
Two on the Aisle	246
Wild Duck (The)	128

1950 Vol.

Affairs of State	267
*Call Me Madam	243
*Guys and Dolls	185

1949 Vol.

*South Pacific	312

1948 Vol.

Kiss Me, Kate (return engagement)	91

**Asterisks indicate shows scheduled to play week of March 24, 1952*

1952 PRODUCTIONS
Reviews Appear in This Volume
Premieres During 1952

Stage Play	*Page*
Anna Christie	395
"Charles Dickens"	371
Collector's Item	368
Come of Age	382
Dear Barbarians	356
Desire Under the Elms	386
Fancy Meeting You Again	392
*Flight Into Egypt	341
Gertie	379
*Golden Boy	344
*Jane	376
*Long Watch (The)	335
*Mrs. McThing	359
*One Bright Day	338
*Pal Joey	398
*Paris '90	348
*Shrike (The)	389
*Three Wishes for Jamie	332
*Venus Observed	364
Women of Twilight	351

Theatre Openings

"Golden Boy" "Flight Into Egypt"
"One Bright Day" "The Long Watch"
"Three Wishes for Jamie"

**Asterisks indicate shows scheduled to play week of March 24, 1952*

Theatre Critics' Reviews brings you each week the complete reviews as they originally appeared in these New York newspapers.

NEW YORK JOURNAL-AMERICAN
NEW YORK DAILY NEWS
NEW YORK POST
NEW YORK MIRROR
NEW YORK WORLD TELEGRAM & THE SUN
NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE
NEW YORK TIMES

All Reviews copyrighted by the newspapers and reproduced by permission.

Yearly Subscription $25.00

Published by CRITICS' THEATRE REVIEWS, Inc., 235 East 22nd Street, New York 10, N. Y.

"Three Wishes for Jamie"

DAILY NEWS

March 22, 1952

'Three Wishes for Jamie' a Gentle Irish Musical; O'Klahoma, Sort of

By JOHN CHAPMAN

There is a song in "Three Wishes for Jamie" which says this is a wishing world—so, in the spirit of the song, this morning I'm wishing the best for the new musical at the Mark Hellinger Theatre. "Jamie" was revealed last night as a big, beautifully mounted, excellently cast show about the fine Irish preference for make-believe. I could wish, since this is a wishing world, that the book were a little tighter and trimmer and that some of the music were a bit lighter and more beguiling; but last evening I did find considerable pleasure in Mr. Farrell's big, handsome show-shop.

The pleasure includes the good singing and fine looks of Anne Jeffreys and John Raitt; the presence of Bert Wheeler as a nice old coot full of blarney; the appearance of such old friends as Robert Halliday and Ralph Morgan, and the dancing of Peter Conlow. Leaving absolutely nothing to be wished for, because they need no improvement, are Miles White's lovely and light-hearted costumes and George Jenkins' handsome settings in and around a horse-traders' camp in Georgia in the year 1896. The top of the evening is a big song and dance number, "Trottin' to the Fair," staged by Eugene Loring—a gay, lusty number performed by a spirited company.

Wishes Come True.

It seems, according to a plot by Charles O'Neal and Abe Burrows, that one Jamie McRuin, of the Old Country, is offered three wishes by a fairy princess, and Jamie chooses wisely. He wants travel, he wants the girl of his dreams and he wants a son who will speak the old Gaelic tongue. And so it is that he travels to Georgia, and here, in the camp of some nomadic Irish horse-traders, he finds the girl. He finds the son, too—in a way which is the crux of the plot.

Miss Jeffreys, always beautiful whether she's in levis or a Paris gown, is fittingly the girl of big John Raitt's dreams. They go well together and sing well together. The songs, by Ralph Blane, are mostly narrative rather than standard "pop"; they are nicely phrased both in words and music. Perhaps the gentle charms of the score will grow on me, but last evening I kept wishing for more of the bounce displayed in the "Trottin' " number.

Mr. Burrows is the director as well as co-author. Now that last night's opening is out of the way, perhaps he can keep his singers and dancers moving about a bit more. There are fine things and fine people in "Three Wishes for Jamie"—enough to make a gently pleasant evening.

"THREE WISHES FOR JAMIE"

Musical play with book by Charles O'Neal and Abe Burrows; music and lyrics by Ralph Blane; based on the novel by Mr. O'Neal; settings by George Jenkins; costumes by Miles White; choreography by Ted Cappy; orchestral arrangements by Robert Russell Bennett; conductor Joseph Littau; staged by Mr. Burrows; presented by Albert Lewis and Arthur Lewis at the Mark Hellinger Theatre, March 21, 1952. The cast:

Tim Shanahan...Robert Halliday
Nora.....Michele Burke
McCaffrey.....Wilton Clary
Bridgie Quinn.....Marie Gibson
Tirsa Shanahan...Charlotte Rae
Owen Roe Tavish..Bert Wheeler
Jamie McRuin.....John Raitt
Power O'Malley...Walter Burke
Maeve Harrigan...Anne Jeffreys
Randal Devlin.....Jeff Morrow
Aunt Bid.....Grania O'Malley
Jess Proddy.....Royal Dano
Shiel Harrigan....Malcolm Keen
Dennis O'Ryan.....Peter Conlow
Father Kerrigan..Ralph Morgan
Kevin.....Billy Chapin
Sheriff Haines.....Dick Foote

NEW YORK Herald Tribune

March 22, 1952

'Three Wishes for Jamie'

By WALTER F. KERR

ANNE JEFFREYS and John Raitt make an extraordinarily handsome romantic couple, and they have a lot to do with turning "Three Wishes for Jamie," which opened at the Mark Hellinger last night, into an amiable spring entertainment.

Raitt, in particular, brings such a candid, good-natured conviction to everything he does that he wins you over to the lighthearted and inconsequential fantasy very quickly. He gets the evening off to a rousing start with a ballad called "The Girl That I Court in My Mind," he sparks the second act with a lively song about army mules, and if you find yourself indulgently believing in a kind of second-hand Irish fairy-tale, it is mostly because Mr. Raitt believes in it.

Charles O'Neal and Abe Burrows have whipped together an easygoing fable out of odd bits and piece of old country lore. Jamie McRuin, running from an unwelcome wedding with one of Ireland's more depressing coleens, is rescued by Queen Oona and offered three wishes. Jamie asks for travel, a beautiful bride, and a son who can speak the ancient tongue.

Jamie's travels bring him to Georgia, and a chance meeting with the legendary Irish horse-traders who roam the highways, pitch tents at night, and drive exceptionally hard bargains. In strong-willed Maeve Harrigan, the leader's daughter, Jamie finds his bride.

But now his disappointments begin. The Harrigan women, it seems, are barren, and when, after two years, Jamie still has no son, he begins to lose faith in his promise of good fortune—and in himself as well. When Maeve conspires to borrow him a son, he accepts her gesture gracefully and finds himself taking to the boy. But the lad proves to be a mute, and Jamie is all but destroyed.

• • •

His troubles are charmingly resolved in the last few minutes, but there isn't really much more to "Three Wishes for Jamie" than this simple, unambitious, tale. The evening is, for instance, astonishingly short on comedy, considering the fact that Mr. Burrows is one of the nimblest gagmen currently devoting himself to this kind of confection. And it is a bit short on dancing, too, especially in view of the fact that no less than three choreographers have had a hand in it.

But there is still a lot that is easy on the eyes and agreeable to the ear in the Hellinger's new show. George Jenkins has somehow or other got a fine, bright gaiety into his softly-tinted backgrounds of rolling hills and wooded lanes. Miles White has costumed the handsome company handsomely, notably in a lavish wedding scene and in the vivid reds and yellows which set the stage spinning in a trotting-race dance. And Mr. Burrows, serving as his own director, has kept the entertainment moving with grace and speed.

• • •

Anne Jeffreys is a lovely, spirited answer to a young man's wish, joining in the felicitous "Goin' on a Hayride" number with high animal spirits and managing her transition to the more sombre moods of Act II—particularly in a lament called "What Do I Know?"—with ease and warmth.

Bert Wheeler is on hand as a matchmaker who keeps forgetting there are some people who aren't Irish, and his reedy-voiced drolleries are agreeable even when the authors aren't writing great big laughs for him. Peter Conlow is a personable dancer, and he does a lot to rescue a somewhat overwrought bit of choreography called "Expectant Father."

Ralph Blane's melodies are pleasant enough in a rather plain, old-fashioned way, though his lyrics—even in the spirited "Trottin' to the Fair"—never get much beyond the "hay ride—gay ride" stage.

"Three Wishes for Jamie" isn't likely to prove the most memorable musical you ever saw, but it has a nice April look to it, and at the end of this week, indeed at the end of this season, it seems quite a pleasant show.

The New York Times

March 22, 1952

AT THE THEATRE

By BROOKS ATKINSON

Believing in the tradition of operetta, the makers of "Three Wishes for Jamie" have given it the full treatment. The production, which opened at the Mark Hellinger last evening, is elaborate and expensive, and it is densely populated with young people in gay costumes. John Raitt, who has a beautiful voice and has become a first-rate romantic actor, sings the leading role of a young Irish lover. And Anne Jeffreys, a handsome woman with an equally pleasing voice, plays opposite him as the wild Harrigan filly.

Everything about the production testifies to the management's determination to stage a distinguished musical work: Bert Wheeler, Ralph Morgan, Malcolm Keen, Jeff Morrow and Robert Halliday as sons of the old sod; costumes by Miles White, who has taste and talent; lighting by Abe Feder, who can light anything from shows to halls of Parliament; orchestrations by Russell Bennett, who can make any score sound like an old master in a holiday mood; orchestra conducted by Joseph Littau, who has the authority of an artist. "Three Wishes for Jamie" is no piker.

* * *

Sooner or later, however, we have to decide whether the creative material is worth all this technical distinction. And here the present reviewer will have to part company with the management. For the book, which has been written by Charles O'Neal and Abe Burrows, follows the conventional pattern of romantic operetta—solemn, sentimental and unimaginative; and the music and lyrics by Ralph Blane have more style than content. "Three Wishes for Jamie" is designed for the people who liked "Magdalena" and "My Romance."

Mr. O'Neal is the author of an Irish novel that won the Christopher Award and provided the basic material for the operetta. Mr. Burrows is, among other things, part author of "Guys and Dolls." To judge by the placidity of what they have written, Mr. O'Neal and Mr. Burrows have battled to a draw. There is a lot of talk about Ireland and the Irish in "Three Wishes for Jamie." There is a wake, a wedding, a birth (a son, of course), some Irish idioms in the music, a suggestion of Arthur Sullivan melody (he was an Irishman) and some fast, noisy, exuberant dancing that has a strong Irish inheritance.

* * *

To most people in the audience last evening, these items seemed to be treasures. The audience was hearty and enthusiastic, as if it were enjoying a St. Patrick's Day parade indoors. But to this reviewer, the Irish legend Mr. O'Neal and Mr. Burrows have evoked has a more immediate Broadway than Irish ancestry. "Three Wishes for Jamie" descends from Broadway operetta of the second decade of this century, which expired because it became a bundle of clichés.

Mr. Raitt sings magnificently. Miss Jeffreys is also a trained musician and sings with grace and sweet decorum. As Owen Roe Tavish, the Irish matchmaker, Mr. Wheeler is as amiable and modest as ever. Let's not forget one other virtue: "Three Wishes for Jamie" is a clean show. But for all the warmth and enthusiasm it has for Irish names, traditions, shibboleths and manners, it is not a hundredth part as Irish as "Mrs. McThing," which is original and imaginative and innocent of Broadway banalities.

Daily Mirror

March 22, 1952

'Three Wishes For Jamie' Filled With Irish Charm

By ROBERT COLEMAN

Albert and Arthur Lewis brought a musical bursting with heart and high spirits to the Mark Hellinger Theatre last evening. Called "Three Wishes for Jamie," it has a book by Charles O'Neal and Abe Burrows, based on the former's Christopher Award novel. And a pleasant and persuasive score by Ralph Blane.

The new arrival has to do with an Irish lad who wins three wishes from a Fairy Queen; that he might travel, that he might marry the girl of his dreams, and that he might have a son with the gift of poetry and Gaelic. He discovers the girl in a horse-trading camp in Georgia, but fate would have it that she be barren.

So they adopt a little boy who turns out to be a mute. But when he is about to be taken away from them through the villainous intervention of a former rival, the youngster miraculously speaks and shames the interloper.

Burrows, who also directed, has assembled a fine cast. John Raitt, who was outstanding in "Oklahoma!" "Carousel" and "Magdalena," is a dynamic Jamie McRuin. His vitality, good looks and robust voice won him salvos of applause. Anne Jeffreys is lovely and completely winning as the girl his wish brings him. Bert Wheeler gives a warm, quite wonderful performance as a matchmaker with a gift of gab.

Robert Halliday, who, along with Guy Robertson, is our all-time choice for tops in light opera heroes, makes a grand return to Broadway as the father of the girl that Jamie jilted in Ireland. His many fans may like to know that Bob sings better than ever. Ralph Morgan, another of our favorites, makes a too small role important with his artistry.

Jeff Morrow, one of our superior young actors, is a credible menace in this instance. Peter Conlow, who won salutes in "Courtin' Time" last season, stopped the show with an amusing dance depicting the anguish of an expectant father. Other helpfuls are Charlotte Rae, Walter Burke, Royal Dano, Grania O'Malley and Billy Chapin.

Miles White has designed costumes more gorgeous than those usually found in itinerant horse-trading camps, and George Jenkins has supplied settings that are atmospheric. Feder, who conceals his first name for some reason, has lighted them expertly. Ted Cappy's choreography caught the fancy of the initial audience. "Jamie" is so packed with action that the gifted Ted must have had to fight to get spots for his rousing ensembles.

The first-nighters loved "Three Wishes for Jamie." They blistered their palms applauding.

New York Post

March 23, 1952

By Richard Watts Jr.

Irish-American Musical Fantasy

Although Abe Burrows has become, in the space of two seasons, one of the important men of the American musical theater, he is not, I think, at his happiest with romantic Irish-American fantasy. At least, "Three Wishes for Jamie," which he and Charles O'Neal, to the accompaniment of a score by Ralph Blane, have made out of a novel by Mr. O'Neal, seemed to me, despite certain considerable merits, rather a disappointment when it was presented at the Mark Hellinger Friday night. There is unquestionably much that is admirable about the new musical play, but there is also a lot of it which impressed me as heavy going.

The merits assuredly include a handsome and colorful production, with excellent sets by George Jenkins, striking and effective costumes by Miles White, and at least one vigorous and imaginative dance number, called "Trottin' to the Fair," for which Eugene Loring has done the choreography. Among the virtues, too, are the fine voice of John Raitt, the dashing presence of Anne Jeffreys, and the pleasantly unostentatious sentimental comedy of Bert Wheeler. I am not so sure about the score that Mr. Blane has provided, but there are several songs that seemed fresh and attractive.

The Three Wishes

Now we get around to the book, which is fairly elaborate. It is, oddly enough, about a young Irishman named Jamie, who is given three wishes by the fairy queen. The first is for travel, so he is hastily transported to Atlanta in the days of President McKinley. The second is for a great love, which he finds in the person of Miss Jeffreys, the handsome daughter of a band of roving Irish horse traders. The third is for a son, who will be able to speak the Irish language, and it is here that he runs into quite a bit of trouble. Not to beat about any bushes, it appears that the lady is incapable of bearing a child.

It strikes me that a woman's barrenness is perhaps not the happiest subject conceivable for romantic fantasy, whether it is Irish or not, but I must say that "Three Wishes for Jamie" at least handles it painlessly. Nevertheless, it is my impression that the revelation by a jealous rejected suitor of the girl's physical condition does not make for a particularly effective first-act

curtain, even in a musical play of serious aims. This, however, is not the end of Jamie's misfortunes. He and his wife finally decide to adopt a boy, but it turns out that the child is dumb, I can report, though, that he regains his speech.

Some Complaints

My querulousness over "Three Wishes For Jamie" arises in great part from a conviction that its story, for all its traces of earnest imagination, is not a very interesting one for a sentimental musical fantasy. Furthermore, it seems to me that it is frequently a bit ponderous in its story-telling, and that its efforts to be whimsically Irish are not always happy or convincing. Finally, I felt that its organization of the narrative was at fault. The first half of the evening dawdles amid its songs and its intermittent comedy, and the more serious plot has to be brought in at quite a rush in the final scenes.

As Jamie, Mr. Raitt has to be pretty surly amid the frustration of his wishes, but you will remember from "Carousel" what a splendid voice he has and what excellent enunciation. Miss Jeffreys is handsome and vigorous as the heroine, and Mr. Wheeler is wholly engaging as a sympathetic Irish friend. Jeff Morrow, always a good actor, gives conviction to the role of the jealous suitor, and Peter Conlow is of help as a dancer and semi-comic juvenile. There is a girl comic named Charlotte Rae, whom many will like. Of the songs, I preferred "Goin' on a Hayride" and "Love Has Nothing to Do with Looks." Regretfully, I cannot be enthusiastic about "Jamie."

Journal American

March 22, 1952

Big and Luxuriant But Not Very Bright

By JOHN McCLAIN

"Three Wishes for Jamie" is a musical based upon a novel by Charles O'Neal which has been displayed elsewhere for limited engagements and was then revised by Abe Burrows and brought into the Mark Hellinger Theatre last night with Anne Jeffreys and John Raitt in the leads.

It is wonderfully well mounted, the principals involved are competent and decorative, but it is my contentious opinion that the story and the music fail to sustain the evening.

I have the highest regard for all concerned: the author, the director, the cast, and the Irish race, but I think they let me down.

* * *

Never Moved

I was never moved by what happened to the people and I wasn't sufficiently elated by Ralph Blane's melodic interpretation of same. There is a good number here and there, for example, "Trottin' to the Fair," but like most of the others it is only a vaguely integrated part of the plot.

Maybe we've all been carried away by "Oklahoma" "Brigadoon" and "Finian's Rainbow." Certainly somebody will someday write a musical in which everybody is not dressed in kilts or chaps and does not speak with a brouge or a drawl, and I will rejoice:

But this isn't it. Here we have a broth of a boy called Jamie, played by John Raitt, who is given three wishes: he can travel, he can marry and he can have a son.

He comes to America, where there is a colony of Irish horse traders, he marries Anne Jeffreys, but then he runs into a snag about the offspring.

She can't have one and when they are about to adopt a reasonable facsimilie it turns out that the kid is dumb—can't talk, not even in Gaelic as promised. But of course when the final curtain is about to ring down he becomes strangely eloquent.

Highly Conventional

That is a brief and unflattering run-down of the proceedings but the fact remains that it is highly conventional fare. It could have been saved by a great score, in which case you would have forgotten the story; or it might have been a compelling tale for which the music served as only a minor background; or it could have been both. I thought it was none and, hence dreary.

That is not to detract from the talents of Anne Jeffreys or John Raitt, who have established their abilities on previous and happier occasions. I also appreciated Bert Wheeler's efforts, which are always rewarding within the limits of his material. The same goes for many others in the large cast.

I would not, however, wish "Three Wishes for Jamie" on the average customer. It is big and luxuriant but it is not bright.

New York World-Telegram and The Sun

March 22, 1952

'Jamie' Fulfills Audience Wishes

By WILLIAM HAWKINS.

One of the year's most highly contented audiences walked out of the Hellinger last night at the end of "Three Wishes for Jamie."

It had witnessed a lusty show, pleasantly familiar in manner but fresh in ideas, blossoming with color, leather lunged in a good old-fashioned way with its music, and dancing with star-dusted feet.

It is big and healthy and frank and funny, sometimes a trifle disjointed, but joyful as all getout.

Jamie has dreamed his wishes as coming from a legendary queen of Ireland. He wants travel, a girl and a son. The show tells how he gets them all, not the way he thought he would, but so he appreciates them all, more than most men do.

Ovations for Raitt.

He comes to Georgia, where in the 90s the Irish horse traders roamed the countryside as gypsies. In their group he finds the girl he has dreamed of, then finds she is barren. How they solve this problem is engagingly told, with some exciting twists in the last few minutes.

John Raitt plays the title role, and pours forth his healthy voice in prodigal style. Only minutes after the start he permanently shattered any audience resistance with a mighty rendition of "The Girl That I Court." Ovations were the order of the evening for him, in the most agile, commanding, relaxed performance of his career.

Show Stopper.

Anne Jeffreys makes a handsome, fiery lady love for Jamie. Bert Wheeler's gentle comic assurance boosts the plot along, and Peter Conlow stops the show with the charming dance of an expectant father, designed by Herbert Ross.

Others in the cast include Charlotte Rae as a comically willing wife and mother, Robert HaHiday and Malcolm Keen as fathers of brides, Jeff Morrow as a villainous reject of the marriage round, and Ralph Morgan as a priest.

Ralph Blaine's score is grandly presented, mostly by Mr. Raitt, in a style rarely heard since Mr. Halliday was singing leads on Broadway. "Goin' on a Hayride" ought to be a big hit, and numbers like "My Home's a Highway," "Heart's Darlin'" and "It's a Wishin' World" will get frequent and varied treatment from vocalists.

Rich and Rousing.

George Jenkins' settings are remarkably rural looking, with the lovely soft colors of a countryside in a sunny light. There is a sequence in the second act designed by Eugene Loring called "Trottin' to the Fair" that looked last night like it might stop the show permanently. In Miles White's glowing yellow costumes, the dancing chorus stages a contest, half equestrian, half square dance, that builds to complete joyous breathlessness.

If the story piles up a little at the close nobody cares, because Abe Burrows has put together a rich, rousing entertainment.

"The Long Watch"

New York World-Telegram and The Sun

March 21, 1952

'The Long Watch' Makes Bow

By WILLIAM HAWKINS.

"The Long Watch" is a diverting little melodramatic comedy about a wartime communications center in San Francisco run by Waves.

The play is contrived agreeably in a manner that never asks to be taken too seriously. Right in the middle it quits being a frivolous romp that barely avoids farce and turns into an adventure story.

Tailored to familiar patterns, the narrative leans on coincidence to keep its balance. The end product is bravely entertaining without being novel or stimulating.

A Television Natural.

The trouble all comes from demands made on the naval outfit by its bad-tempered commanding officer. She thinks the only way to get "results" is to be tough. One of the girls pretends to remove a top secret code book from this lieutenant's desk, and circumstances snowball her prank into a catastrophe.

One of the youngsters gets married, but the C. O. restricts her to base. She goes AWOL, falls asleep on her watch and misses a radio signal that endangers a plane crew of 15 men.

"The Long Watch" is stuff of which many movies have been made. With its current content of saucy damsels, wise cracks and punchy heart tugs, it looks like a natural springboard for a television serial.

An Agreeable Company.

Meanwhile it is being played at the Lyceum by a very agreeable company. Walter Abel is an irritable captain, shored in command over the radio unit.

Sonia Sorel has the assignment of the commanding officer whose humorless disciplinarianism starts the plot rolling. She combines gracefully the feminine urges and the chill bossiness of the character.

Anne Meacham makes an attractive ensign, who almost loses her man. Lloyd Knight does well with a dry-spoken Yankee repairman, Gloria Evans and Patricia Englund take over the fast talk department and Christine White is the tragic little bride.

The play has a highly suitable production by John Blankenchip and waits between scenes are quicker than the eye.

"THE LONG WATCH"

Play by Harvey Haislip; staged by John Larson; scenery and costumes by John Blankenchip; presented by Anthony B. Farrell and Charles Coburn at the Lyceum Theatre, March 20, 1952. The cast:

Commander Harrison.....Albert Bergh
Blanche Kelley.....Gloria Evans
Susie Blake.....Christine White
Ruth Spencer.....Peggy Nelson
Selma Williams.....Patricia Englund
Wolf Blankenship...Lloyd Knight
Ensign Jane Hilton.....Anne Meacham
Lt. Lennox.....Sonia Sorel
Lt. Dick Bennett.....Carl Betz
Lt. Tex Connoly....James Wyler
Capt. Mike Dorgan..Walter Abel
Joe Davis.....Harry Holsten
Coding Officer.....Peg Menefee
Shore Patrol.....Arthur Oshlag
Ann Sutton.....Lois Harmon

Journal American

March 21, 1952

The Watch Was About An Hour Too Long

By JOHN McCLAIN

"The Long Watch," a new play by Harvey Haislip which was presented by Anthony Farrell and Charles Coburn at the Lyceum Theatre last night struck me as being about one hour too long.

The watch should have begun somewhere toward the end of the first act, if at all, and there were even segments of the second act that might have been happily left on the cutting room floor. As it is the audience should not be disciplined for either sleeping on duty or outright desertion.

Haislip has essayed to write a sort of poor woman's "What Price Glory," using the wartime Waves in the Air Sea Rescue service as background and substituting a tough lady lieutenant for the usual uncompromising martinet who makes life miserable for the enlisted personnel.

* * *

Code Book Taken

In this version Sonia Sorel, the lieutenant, has been giving the Waves in her communications unit a very bad time, so when she is negligent enough to leave a top secret code book lying around, one of them grabs it, hoping thus to have her brought up on charges.

Instead she confines them all to quarters, even little Susie who has that day been married and was quite logically looking forward to spending the evening with her new husband, a crew man in the rescue service.

Little Susie goes AWOL anyway, so great is her love, and when she comes back to duty early the next morning she falls asleep briefly during her watch. This is of course exactly when she should have sent out a storm warning to all planes.

I hardly need to tell you that a plane is forced down at sea with one of the girl's sweethearts aboard, and who do you think is sent out to rescue them? Susie's husband, whose pilot is mixed up with one of the other girls.

When this situation is finally resolved you can be sure the lieutenant is an immeasurably regenerated character.

The author, I thought, spent an interminable time setting the stage for the inevitable moment when the Air Sea Rescue service would spring into action. And even then there was the sense that one had been through it all before: the desperate voice over the loud speaker, the calm yet heroic answer from the ground. "Command Decision," "South Pacific," remember?

* * *

Even so, this part of the proceedings packs a punch. I found myself caring about those guys on a raft and the fellows flying over them, running out of gas and gambling that the destroyer would arrive before it was too late. But I regret that this does not constitute enough of the long watch to justify the duty.

Walter Abel, playing the role of a Navy captain who has been returned from sea to command the rescue station, delivers an entirely faithful and humorous performance; Sonia Sorel, the aforementioned lieutenant, manages to combine sex and severity in a pleasant equation; and I also was impressed by the operations of Christine White, Anne Meacham, Lloyd Knight and Gloria Evans.

The sets by John Blankenchip were apparently authentic and so were his costumes, although I don't know how he could miss on the latter since everybody was in uniform.

Sorry, but in the parlance of the Navy—negative. Over and out.

The New York Times

March 21, 1952

'The Long Watch,' Featuring Walter Abel, Portrays Air-Sea Rescue Forces of Wartime Navy

By BROOKS ATKINSON

Although we all love our Navy and admire its gallantry, we are entitled to be more reserved about its art. "The Long Watch," which was acted at the Lyceum last evening, with Bull Halsey conning from an orchestra seat, is the work of Capt. Harvey Haislip, who knows his way around naval communications rooms.

This communications room is manned, if you will pardon the word, by some WAVES under the command of a female lieutenant who is tough. In the second act a plane gets into trouble and the crew has to take to the rafts. The best part of "The Long Watch" dramatizes a rescue through messages barked out of an amplifier.

* * *

Captain Haislip writes this scene like a professional. It is exciting and legitimate; and John Larson's direction is terse and effective. But Captain Haislip writes about the WAVES with less distinction. Perhaps he is overeager. The whole first act is devoted to the subject of women in the Navy. If "The Long Watch" were a service entertainment for a social evening at a naval base, it doubtless would be greatly admired and be mulled over at mess for the next fortnight. On Broadway, however, Captain Haislip's racy portrait of the WAVES seems like hackneyed playwriting. And his sense of humor about sex is strictly for the washrooms ashore.

* * *

Broadway has not let the WAVES down. Sonia Sorel as the strict disciplinarian and Anne Meacham as her executive officer make the stategoing worth while and doubtless would improve the morale of the Navy if they joined the service. Lloyd Knight plays the standard comic relief in the best of humor as a maintenance man assigned to the communications room. Boss of the station is Walter Abel, who plays Capt. Mike Dorgan, hero of the sea and a bachelor. Dressed in well-fitted uniforms, one at a time, Mr. Abel is loud and clear and good company.

But Captain Haislip's notion of the bachelor sailor is about as stereotyped as a comic-book serial. When he is dramatizing Navy organization he is an engrossing writer. Men and women are not his best subjects, although he devotes more than half of "The Long Watch" to the foibles and romances of the personnel.

Daily Mirror

March 21, 1952

'Long Watch' Lacks Cumulative Effect

By ROBERT COLEMAN

What Joshua Logan and Thomas Heggen did for the Navy in "Mister Roberts," Harvey Haislip has attempted to do for the Waves in "The Long Watch," which arrived at the Lyceum Theatre last evening, under the banner of Anthony B. Farrell and Charles Coburn. Haislip has etched some interesting characters and provided them with some amusing and tautly dramatic scenes.

But we left the Lyceum with the feeling that he had failed to make the most of his material, that he hadn't been able to decide whether the work was to be essentially a comedy or a drama. The first act depends mainly upon laughs to hold the interest, while the second and better stanza builds to a tensely tragic climax.

The locale is the temporary headquarters of Air-Sea Rescue Forces and Naval Patrols in the Western Sea Frontier during World War II. A testy but kindly captain finds himself in command. He has been given the assignment to permit his recovery from battle fatigue. He is amazed to discover women instead of men handling communications. His blunt diplomacy and resourcefulnesss are put to a stern test.

For women will be women, even though they're in the Waves. The executive officer is a femme dedicated to efficiency and discipline. Her subordinates resent her and plot her downfall. But a crisis proves that she is human and sympathetic at heart. To tell you more would lessen the suspense for those who may see the play.

"The Long Watch" poses a distasteful task for a reviewer. Haislip has caught the flavor of service life, has penned so many passages of merit that a critic finds it unpleasant to turn thumbs down at the final curtain. There are moments of genuine hilarity and moments of high excitement. But somehow the whole lacks cumulative effect, seems to be under-written.

Veteran Walter Abel, as the salty, often baffled skipper, gives a performance that is warm and convincing. The remainder of the cast has been drafted from radio, Summer stock and television. There are a number of promising and engaging young players, notably Sonia Sorel, Anne Meacham, Patricia Englund, Christine White, Lloyd Knight, Peggy Nelson, Gloria Evans, Peg Menefee and Arthur Oshlag.

John Larson has directed the youthful company with helpful skill. John Blankenchip has designed settings and costumes that lend authenticity.

"The Long Watch" is really a a short script, and there's the rub. It lets go too soon, after getting a grip on the emotions. It fails to follow through, with success almost in its grasp. More's the pity, for an ailing season could use another first rate play.

DAILY NEWS

March 21, 1952

'The Long Watch' Half Drama and Half Comedy—but Only Half Good

By JOHN CHAPMAN

For about half its length, the new play at the Lyceum Theatre, "The Long Watch," is an amiable if aimless comedy about the Navy's WAVES in the old Pearl Harbor war. In the remaining part of its length, author Harvey Haislip's piece figures it had better start going somewhere before the audience goes home, and it decides to become dramatic.

There is no reason why this should not be done in the theatre, but in the case of "The Long Watch" the dramatic part is not very well done and therefore there isn't much sense in having done it. All of the drama in the dramatic part—an air-sea rescue of a crashed transport the crash of a rescue plane and the suicide of a pretty young WAVE—takes place offstage. It seems to me that after a couple of thousand years of the theatre, dramatists should have learned that the big, crucial moments of a play must take place before the eyes of the audience, and must not be reported by radio, telephone or messenger.

Good Navy Routine.

Haislip a Navy man, has written a play that sounds authentic, and John Blankenchip, the scene designer, has made it look authentic with stacks of wireless equipment. The setting is the communications room in the California coast headquarters of air-sea rescue forces and naval patrols. Here young ladies of the Navy man the gadgets and keep in touch with fliers over the Pacific, and when somebody gets in trouble they control the search and rescue parties aloft and afloat.

In this room one finds the routine, the camaraderie, the jokes and the hatreds of military service; it's no different from a man's war, except that the language is a little nicer. For a while, "The Long Watch" looks like a combination of "Sailor Beware," "Kiss the Boys Goodbye" and "Ceiling Zero," all of which were good. But it's only for a while, even though there are attractive performances by Walter Abel, Sonia Sorel, Christine White, Gloria Evans, Patricia Englund, Peggy Nelson and other. The actor who comes off best is Lloyd Knight, playing a sloppy radio repair man who finds himself attached to a women's Navy and becomes resigned to it.

California's Charles Coburn and Albany's Anthony B. Farrell collaborated on the production of "The Long Watch."

NEW YORK Herald Tribune
March 21, 1952

'The Long Watch'

By WALTER F. KERR

"THE LONG WATCH," which was launched at the Lyceum Thursday night, is intended as a tribute to the feminine branch of the Navy in World War II. I am afraid, however, that it is going to do about as much for the Waves as a play called "Grandma's Diary" once did for diaries.

Harvey Haislip is currently credited with the authorship of this straight-faced little epic about rescue operations at sea, but the plot is straight Twentieth Century-Fox. It seems that there is this fine, upstanding team of girl radio operators who have a fine, upstanding team spirit. To them comes Lt. Genevieve Lennox, a new commanding officer, and she is something of a martinet. She will not let them keep their pet turtles around the office as mascots, and she is not a bit understanding when they steal her code book as a lark. Also, she is not very sympathetic about love.

She is, in short, bad for morale. Company spirit goes to hell for a while, and Lt. Lennox finally faces up to the fact that she has won no hearts. She hands in her resignation. But it turns out that she is a very handy girl in a crisis, the team decides that she is just bully after all, and the curtain goes down on more spirit than ever. There are no short subjects.

Before it came to town, "The Long Watch" had a co-author who reportedly withdrew his name from the credits because of a managerial decision to soft-pedal the play's comedy and to accent its drama. This is mystifying, in view of the fact that the piece is up to its neck in girls' school high jinks.

There is quite a bit of comedy devoted to the ladies' rest room, there is some splendid fun about climbing into bunk beds, and there is a nitwit girl who gets jokes one scene after they have been told.

Everybody, in fact, is as cute as all get-out, and nobody is cuter than the Captain. Walter Abel, normally a reliable and discriminating actor, has been forced to play the exasperated officer who is handed a bevy of blonde technicians and he has succumbed, heart and soul, to the giddy whimsy of the play. He rolls his eyes, does prolonged slow burns, and pounds away at desks in clear confidence that he has been cast in another "Mister Roberts." In all fairness to Mr. Abel it must be said that he handles the later, and more melodramatic, portions of the play with quiet authority.

Sonia Sorel, however, juices up both the comedy and the drama with about equal abandon. She is the cocky lieutenant, a part which would be played in the movies by Richard Widmark, and she is given a lot of throaty, chin-up stuff to do. She does it with something more than gusto, leveling her eyes, curling her lip, and flaring her nostrils in a performance faintly reminiscent of the late George Arliss.

Some of the lesser people are reasonably attractive. Patricia Englund sounds as though she'd know what to do with a good comedy line if she ever got one, Christine White is appealing as a newlywed who loses her man to the sea, and Anne Meacham struck me as a remarkably pretty girl.

One of the author's more interesting dialogue tricks is to chop off a comedy line in the middle, as though something very, very funny had not been said. And it hadn't. One line, though, did strike me as having genuine humor. In a tense moment in the first act one girl turned to her fellow Wave and said:

"You're in the Navy, Blanche. You know the penalty for hitting an officer."

Roger.

New York Post
March 21, 1952

By Richard Watts Jr.

The Navy Girls at Work and Play

Since Morrie Ryskind, the vanishing co-author, has withdrawn his name from "The Long Watch," sole responsibility for the play about the WAVES at war, which opened at the Lyceum last night, must be borne by his former partner in the writing, Harvey Haislip, and Mr. Haislip is an Annapolis graduate and a veteran of the Navy. Therefore, it must be taken for granted that he knows his stuff about life at the headquarters of the Air-Sea Rescue Forces and Naval Patrols in the Western Sea Frontier. But he is also a very primitive playwright.

In the course of his play, five fliers die gallantly offstage and one of the Navy girls kills herself because she believes she is to blame for her husband's death, but, somehow or other, such carnage does not keep the war, as reflected in "The Long Watch," from seeming a remarkably cosy and coy one. The girls are game and gallant, but they are also a bit kittenish, and they talk about men in a manner to suggest that they had all been to see "Mister Roberts" and were bent on showing that they, too, knew how to make their jokes about sex.

The WAVE in charge is a lady known as Lieut. Lennox, and, unless Mr. Haislip is deceiving us, she is a hard woman, who deprives her girls of their pet turtles and orders them — the girls, that is — confined to quarters when they take reprisal on her by hiding her code book. But even Lieut. Lennox, I'm sure you will be glad to know, has a heart of gold concealed beneath her stern exterior, and, after the offstage carnage has taken place and time for the final curtain approaches, her innate nobility emerges, and the girls and a gruff Captain come to love her.

Although the girls pretty much dominate the talk and action of "The Long Watch," the males do appear from time to time. For one, there is that gruff Captain, who is at first a little embarrassed to find himself in command of a group of women after his years of heroic warfare, but somehow manages to console himself. There is also a comic sailor, who needs a haircut and forgets to put film in his camera when taking pictures, as well as several dashing young seamen who go offstage to die.

One thing must be said for radio communication in the drama, and that is that even an inexpert playwright can use it with emotional effectiveness. When the WAVES are sending messages to the fliers lost in a Pacific storm and receive final word from their men before they die at sea, the narrative takes on a momentary interest that the coy dialogue of the rest of the proceedings cannot completely hide. There is something disarming about the ingenuousness of Mr. Haislip's play, but it certainly isn't notable for humor or credibility.

The acting is at least as good as the narrative deserves. Sonia Sorel manages the disagreeable side of Lieut. Lennox more persuasively than she does the lady's reform wave, and somewhat more pleasant young women are ably enough portrayed by Christine White, Anne Meacham, Peggy Nelson, Patricia Englund, and Gloria Evans. The reliable Walter Abel roars his way competently through the part of the veteran sea dog, and Lloyd Knight succeeds in being bearable as the chief comic relief. But "The Long Watch" is a very minor little effort.

"One Bright Day"

New York Herald Tribune

March 20, 1952

'One Bright Day'

By WALTER F. KERR

"ONE BRIGHT DAY," which came to the Royale on Wednesday is a sleek, handsomely mounted, tidily directed production of a very old-fashioned kind of play.

Sigmund Miller is telling—or retelling—the one about the affluent business man who suddenly discovers that he is marketing a harmful product, and is faced with a choice between saving the lives of his customers or wrecking the lives of his associates, his family, and the community which is dependent upon his factories.

The story served Ibsen well in "An Enemy of the People," and it has undergone a good many variations since. Indeed there is little point in working the materials over once more unless some genuine contemporary reference, or some fresh imaginative insight, can be found for it.

There are times in the course of the well acted evening at the Royale when author Miller, whose first produced play this is, seems about to stumble on the transmuting magic. He has invested his principal figure, drug manufacturer Julian Prescott, with a hard-headed intelligence and an admirable directness of manner. Howard Lindsay plays him with gruff integrity, and we are led for awhile into thinking that the problem is going to be restated for 1952 and for a newly responsible, and fact-finding world.

There is sophistication in Prescott's scenes with his daughter, in his blunt advice about marriage, in the understanding he brings to his wife when she, too, wavers in her loyalty to him.

And the author has humor. He has invented a number of very funny things for Glenn Anders, as a ubiquitous playboy, to say. Mr. Anders skirts the fringes of the action, commenting waspishly on the personal foibles and the private deceits of his friends. This vein of easy wit, delivered with droll relish, is helpful to the play, helpful in glossing over its skeleton-like structure, its all too familiar gestures.

But it is a bald business, all in all. The manufacturer's scheming assistant runs true to form for this kind of manipulated melodrama. He has secretly altered the product. He has been buying up shares in the company on the sly. He has embroiled the boss' daughter in a seamy back-street love affair. And he is willing to browbeat a broken-hearted father into believing that it was he himself, and not the defective drug, that killed his only son.

The characterizations run—to strong blacks and whites, and the dialogue, after a firm and clear-headed start, explodes into the sententiousness of "Is it so long since you've been in love?" and the declamation of "You—are a betrayer!" The author has even permitted himself a thunderstorm—a relatively mild one, to be sure—to help build up the menace of his climactic scenes. The cat is out of the bag too often for comfort, and the evening at last degenerates into an exercise in convenient plotting.

In addition to Howard Lindsay's skillful and straightforward playing, and to Glenn Anders' pleasantly mannered comedy, there are fine secondary performances. Walter Matthau makes the ingratiating scoundrel far more plausible than his author had any right to expect, and Phillip Pine, Bart Burns, Joseph Warren and Paul Rust make sensitive, dimensional people out of parts which are little more than cogs in the play's machinery.

Raymond Sovey's two settings are clean, spacious, and attractive, and Michael Gordon has directed with an admirable simplicity. But the play is fundamentally bare and mechanical, and the forceful work of a stageful of sound professionals cannot keep the echoes of an earlier theater from rattling around in it.

"ONE BRIGHT DAY"

Play by Sigmund Miller; staged by Michael Gordon; scenery by Raymond Sovey; costumes by Noel Taylor; presented by Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse at the Royale Theatre, March 19, 1952. The cast:

George Lawrence..... Walter Matthau
Julian Prescott.. Howard Lindsay
Frederick Newberry..... Raymond Bramley
Stanley Archer... Kermit Kegley
Louise Gordon.. Helen Harrelson
Ginny..... Leora Thatcher
Tom McGowan..... Bruce Evans
Margot Prescott.. Marian Russell
Sheila Prescott... Bess Winburn
Arthur Mitchell.... Glenn Anders
Paul La Barca..... Phillip Pine
John Hagerty..... Bart Burns
Theodore Cahill..... Addison Richards
Dr. Ferguson.... Joseph Warren
Paul Rust... Raymond Van Sickle

New York World-Telegram and The Sun

March 20, 1952

'One Bright Day' Brightens Broadway

By WILLIAM HAWKINS.

The Royale's new tenant, "One Bright Day," has the straightforward honesty and excellence Broadway has been seeking all season. Here is a suspenseful melodrama of morals, a thriller of ethics, that grips you from rising to final curtain.

In the first five minutes you learn that the formula of a successful patent medicine has suddenly been changed, for unconvincing reasons. A child who was dosed with it, is dead. With these signals, the race is on.

Simply and relentlessly the problem builds. The firm's president, returned from recuperation, finds that his product can be fatal in certain remote cases. The management has called back the medicine, ostensibly for merchandising reasons, and eliminated the dangerous element.

The Danger Remains.

Yet potential danger remains in already opened packets in consumers' homes. These possible victims can only be warned publicly, with the resultant ruin of the firm.

The president's daughter is deeply in love with her father's chief opponent in the firm. His wife joins the chief stockholders in insisting that none of them is young enough to abandon his standard of living. The whole community depends on this one business.

Like the most enthralling mystery story, the problem is solved in the last few seconds of the play. The president's decision suddenly becomes inevitable, the result of forces that have been subtly but clearly revealed all through the evening.

It Isn't Preachy.

"One Bright Day" is written with economy, in clean-cut honest dialogue, which has passages of great humor, despite the serious theme. Though a moral argument, the work never preaches. Right and wrong just belt it out like perfectly trained boxers. The customers' hearts are in their mouths till the last bell of the final round.

Howard Lindsay plays the president of the pharmaceutical firm with homely, masculine passion. This is solid performing that gives depth and solidity to the evening.

Glenn Anders is as acute as ever as a wisecracking lush who finally confesses his weaknesses. He gets both aspects of the character in expert balance, and gives the play a valuable proportion.

Walter Matthau expresses the ruthless ambition of his character without pulling punches, yet convinces you that the girl, played with high success by Marian Russell, could fall for him.

Michael Gordon's direction has given the drama every subtle temper and enthralling tension it deserves.

The New York Times

March 20, 1952

AT THE THEATRE

By BROOKS ATKINSON

After about one act of fooling around with inconsequential humor, Sigmund Miller gets down to business in "One Bright Day," put on at the Royale last evening. The president of a pharmaceutical company has to decide a tough moral point. He has discovered that under certain conditions his product is dangerous to the health of the customers. If he publicly recalls the product, his company will be discredited and go broke. If he depends on less drastic means of getting the product back, someone may die from using it.

* * *

In mystery dramas it is regarded as unethical to publish the conclusion, since the solution is a marketable trade secret. Although "One Bright Day" is not a mystery drama, it is a problem play, and perhaps the same trade practice applies to reviewing it. There is, however, no way of concealing the fact that Howard Lindsay plays the part of the manufacturer. Apart from being a good egg himself, Mr. Lindsay is an admirable actor—clear, decisive, agreeable and pleasantly humorous; and this is one of his best performances. Draw your own conclusions about his standards of conduct in a play, as well as out of one, and don't muddle things by a professional cynic.

* * *

"One Bright Day" is a thoroughly absorbing play, particularly the deeper it gets into its subject. Mr. Miller has assembled some interesting characters and put them into situations that bring interesting reactions out of them. Many playwrights know how to write about love and family affairs with a certain amount of flavor.

But Mr. Miller has also succeeded in making the business problems of a manufacturing company plausible and dramatic. The critical meeting of the board of directors is exciting. Mr. Miller has written it so artfully. If all the people who complain that the theatre invariably slanders business will have the goodness to visit "One Bright Day," Mr. Miller's problem drama ought to have a pleasant run.

* * *

Thanks to Michael Gordon's alert direction and Raymond Sovey's attractive scenery, "One Bright Day" has an inviting appearance on the stage. As the court jester, fitted out with a fine collection of amusing lines, Glenn Anders gives an entertaining performance and keeps the play from sounding solemn. Walter Matthau, representing the ugly side of business and also the predatory side of romance, gives an excellent performance. There must be some good in the character somewhere, Mr. Matthau is so personable.

As the president's daughter, Marian Russell is able and enchanting, and Bess Winburn does as well by the part of the mother. In fact, there are good performances all the way through. For Mr. Miller has put his play together with professional skill, and the production is first-rate theatre work. Even if you are not president of a pharmaceutical plant, you are likely to find the ethical problems of "One Bright Day" pertinent and stimulating.

Daily Mirror

March 20, 1952

'One Bright Day' Proves To Be 'One Dull Night'

By ROBERT COLEMAN

Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse have become wonder boys of the contemporary theatre. As playwrights and producers, they have had an enviable record. They have been particularly successful with satiric comedy. Last evening, they waded out of their depth into some rough, melodramatic waves, and the result was not a happy one.

They brought to the Royale Theatre Sigmund Miller's "One Bright Day," a contrived, unabashed, rip-roaring melodrama. A melodrama of the old school in disarmingly slick dress. Boiled down to essentials, the new arrival is not unlike the dour Henrik Ibsen's "An Enemy of the People," equipped with laughs yet.

Miller is concerned with a patent drug tycoon who learns that his daughter's sweetheart is a scoundrel. The rascal in his own interest, has changed the formula of the firm's favorite drug after it has proved to be toxic, fatally so in one instance. And he has secretly conspired to gain control of the company's stock. He is an ambitious cad.

Upon discovering the young executive's perfidy, the honest entrepreneur sets about rectifying matters. Even though his actions may prove financially disastrous to the community, the stockholders and himself. He turns into a veritable Dr. Stockman, though somehow, at the Royale, he fails to gain the stature of that noble crusader.

Co-producer Lindsay, recently relieved of less serious and more enjoyable chores in "Remains to Be Seen," gives a straightforward and often effective performance as the patent medicine mogul. Walter Matthau, who hasn't fared too well since his click in Wolcott Gibbs' "Season in the Sun," is excellent as the unscrupulous opportunist.

Raymond Bramley, Kermit Kegley, Helen Harrelson, Marian Russell, Bess Winburn, Phillip Pine, Bart Burns, Addison Richards, Joseph Warren and Raymond Van Sickle act other empty roles with amazing conviction, under the direction of Michael Gordon.

But it is Glenn Anders who scores the hit of the evening as a dissolute, spineless, cynical playboy. Whenever the Miller opus appeared about to come apart at the seams, Anders was rushed onstage to deliver expertly some bright lines. It was probably in his honor that the play was entitled "One Bright Day." We can't think of any other reason.

As we sat through Miller's well-tailored, pretentious dramatics, we kept remembering "Flight Into Egypt," which opened the night before just across the street at the Music Box. We found faults in that play, but it towers head and shoulders above the new competitor at the Royale.

"Flight Into Egypt," for all its rambling structure, despite its inability to get going in its early passages, has the integrity, purpose and depth regrettably lacking in "One Bright Day."

So let's just call it "One Dull Night."

DAILY NEWS

March 20, 1952

'One Bright Day' Nicely Produced Drama About Pill Business Ethics

By JOHN CHAPMAN

I don't know what the title of "One Bright Day" means, but this new piece by Sigmund Miller is a rather interesting drama about a drug manufacturer who learns that his patented pain-killer is injurious to some kidneys and fatal to the owners of the kidneys. Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse produced it last evening at the Royale Theatre with Lindsay in the leading role. They have given it a good production and a good cast and thus have made it look more exciting than it really is.

It's quite a lot of plot for a play about a pill. Lindsay has been sick (it says in the plot) and during his absence an ambitious aid, Walter Matthau, manages the drug company. He calls in the old pills, changes the formula on the new ones, conspires to gain stock control, makes the boss' daughter his mistress, acts cruelly toward a poor man whose small son has been killed by the drug and is, all told, quite vigorous. The conflict is between Matthau's realistic ambition to save the company and the stockholders' money and Lindsay's sense of decency.

Miller writes crisp, straightaway theatre stuff, and the players in "One Bright Day" are thoroughly professional and engaging. Lindsay displays his accustomed easy authority in the role of the idealist and Matthau makes a first-class opponent. Glenn Anders has one of his fine, fruity comedy roles as a cynical stockholder who likes women and liquor better than stock.

Marian Russell is most charming and effective as the daughter who, having been trained in idealism by her father, summons the courage to give up the man she loves. The two sets—a living room and an office—are by Raymond Sovey, and the company of 15 actors has been directed smoothly and plausibly by Michael Gordon.

Journal-American

March 20, 1952

A Contrived Play; Acting Is Excellent

By JOHN McCLAIN

The pharmaceutical business was considered at some length last night when Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse presented a new play called "One Bright Day" at the Royale Theatre, with Howard Lindsay, Glenn Anders and Walter Matthau in the featured roles.

This fresh fragment from the pen of Sigmund Miller displays moments of strenuous impact, serves as a pliable background for the many gifted performers in the cast but does not, in my opinion, prove a very profound point.

The problem under discussion is that of a drug manufacturer who discovers that one of the ingredients in his product is slightly lethal.

There are all sorts of complications: a smug and mercenary board of directors and a bright young man who is not only bent upon marrying his daughter but also has been secretly trying to buy control of the company.

* * *

Contrived

Despite all these distractions, many of them quite engrossing, it came as no great surprise to me when Howard Lindsay picked up the phone at the final curtain to tell the world that some of his pills were poison.

"Contrived" is a nasty word, but in lieu of a better one it must be used for many of the situations in Miller's offering. The drug tycoon is ill at the appropriate moment, the label on the old bottle gives warning against its too frequent use, there is even the suggestion that the destructive product will be called in and nobody will suffer.

But in the final analysis Lindsay's decision is fairly simple: he warns the public of the danger of his drug or he keeps his mouth shut and runs the risk of killing a number of innocent people. Being Howard Lindsay, a solid citizen, he tells everybody the truth—and thereby blows his business.

It seems to me the whole thing might have been settled early in the proceedings by the Pure Food and Drug Department and thus saved everybody a lot of time and, perhaps money.

Pretty and Capable

Lindsay delivers his usual restrained and purposely non-professional performance in the big part and Walter Matthau projects valiantly as the scheming young executive. Marian Russell, as Lindsay's daughter, is not only extremely decorative, but capable.

Glenn Anders, after all these years, is dragged into the premises to supply a certain number of comical off-beat remarks which have very little to do with the plot or the general hilarity of the audience.

In smaller stations there are notable performances by Phillip Pine, Bart Burns, Raymond Bramley and Joseph Warren.

Michael Gordon's direction was certainly acceptable, within the somewhat limited sphere of the action, and Raymond Sovey deserves credit for two workable and authentic sets.

Unhappily, I do not believe that "One Bright Day" provides a very bright evening.

New York Post

March 20, 1952

By Richard Watts Jr.

A Drama About a Moral Dilemma

It may not be too academic to note that Sigmund Miller's "One Bright Day," which opened at the Royale last night, bears a definite spiritual resemblance to Henrik Ibsen's "An Enemy of the People." Since this is Mr. Miller's first play, the stern and mighty Norwegian provides a commendable model for an enterprising new dramatist, and gives his work dignity, intelligence and a fine moral earnestness. It is, however, one of the disturbing things about the theater that high endeavor and a certain amount of achievement, while they are of vast help, do not altogether make for an evening of dramatic satisfaction.

In his play, which understandably attracted the interest of the producing firm of Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse, Mr. Miller is telling the story of a prosperous and respectable drug manufacturer who makes the terrible discovery that one of his most successful products contains a harmful ingredient and has resulted in the death of a boy. He also learns that an ambitious young employe of the firm, who is in love with his daughter, has known of the drug's danger, and, when the manufacturer takes up the matter with his board of directors, he discovers that financial profits mean more to them than the peril to life.

Moral Conflict

The Ibsen parallel, I take it, is clear enough, with its sardonic portrayal of the conflict between moral decency and economic interest, and its account of the upright man who sees that the livelihood of his own family stands in the way of the satisfaction of his tortured conscience. Certainly, "One Bright Day" is no straight paraphrase of "An Enemy of the People." It has its particular points to make about a reasonably similar situation, and it presents them with force and integrity amid a number of scenes that are dramatic and impressive. There is much that is striking about Mr. Miller's writing.

Indeed, so much that is admirable has gone into "One Bright Day" that it seems particularly surly to find it, in the end, less than satisfying as drama. But the work has an unfortunate way of seeming diffuse and of going off on ineffectual side issues. The daughter's love affair, for example, appears more of an interference than an assistance, and the character of the up-and-coming employe, who knows about the drug's danger, is not sufficiently realized. While Mr. Miller's play is excellent in individual scenes, it lacks the direct and forceful dramatic drive that might have made it continuously engrossing.

Howard Lindsay

That it is not altogether effective is certainly not due to Howard Lindsay's portrayal of the central role. Never having seen Mr. Lindsay in a serious dramatic part, I was not prepared for the sensitiveness, depth, power and completeness that he gets into his characterization of the well-meaning drug magnate who suddenly finds his world of integrity collapsing around him. It is a performance of authentic distinction that gives the entire play honesty and credibility. But, then, whatever the weaknesses of the work may be otherwise, its acting in most of the roles is enormously helpful.

Walter Matthau, who has already made a notable impression in two earlier plays of the season, again proves that he is an actor of striking skill and individuality, even though the part of the ruthless employe seems incompletely written. Glenn Anders, an unfailingly talented player, portrays a weak and witty member of the board with his customary effectiveness, and there are particularly good characterizations by Raymond Bramley as another ruthless drug man, Philip Pine as a young lawyer, Bart Burns as the father of the dead boy, and Joseph Warren as a doctor. "One Bright Day" is almost a fine drama.

"Flight Into Egypt"

New York World-Telegram and The Sun

March 19, 1952

Conflict's Intense In 'Flight Into Egypt'

By WILLIAM HAWKINS.

There is boundless dramatic excitement about "Flight Into Egypt." Once again it brings into the theater a major theme of our day, the problem of the displaced person.

Here the crisis in the journey of a Viennese family toward America is examined with elaborate detail which serves to intensify the conflicts without particularly illuminating the people.

The play entices your attention almost too obviously. Its high points are powerful, even shattering. But nothing in between them is ever told simply. Every tiny incident has an angle or an O. Henry twist. This is interesting, but it consumes enthusiasm.

Waiting for Ships.

A haberdasher, wounded in Buchenwald, has finally come to Cairo with his wife and small son, and their life is spent waiting for visas to America. The play reveals their struggle with poverty and greed, and the intense drama of the way being opened for them, then suddenly blocked by the man's paralysis.

The whole thing takes place in a small Cairo hotel, where there is no such thing as a normal, simple human being. George Tabori, the playwright, emphasizes plot twists at the expense of the blood and breath of his characters. As a result they all seem exotic eccentrics. An actor's paradise, it is not pure heaven for the audience.

The finest moments are conventional situations, where pure emotion holds sway. The wife's desperate outcry that she will somehow get the necessary money, the father's determined effort to prove to the doctor he is well, and his final scene with the child, are all deeply moving.

Distinctive Actor.

Paul Lukas is one of the few actors who can bring real distinction to a play by simply being in it. Despite the effectiveness of his big scenes, one might suspect that he is not too happy with the strangely unsympathetic protagonist he plays here.

For Gusti Huber, Viennese debutante on our boards, the evening is a triumph, in the role of the wife.

As the child, Voytek Dolinski reveals an extraordinary personality. Skinny, round-shouldered and knobby-jointed, he has the crass humor and defensive abruptness one must expect of a child from such a turbulent background. He seems a million years old, yet is as winning as he is terrifying.

"FLIGHT INTO EGYPT"

Play by George Tabori; staged by Elia Kazan; scenery by Jo Mielziner; costumes by Anna Hill Johnstone; presented by Irene Mayer Selznick at the Music Box Theatre, March 18, 1952. The cast:

Glubb.....Zero Mostel
Hassan.....Fred Williams
Tewfik Bey.....David Opatoshu
Lili Engel.....Gusti Huber
Franz Engel.....Paul Lukas
Bubi Engel.....Voytek Dolinski
Bartender.....Chris Gampel
Mr. Kuglhof.....Edgar Franken
Mrs. Kuglhof.....Ellen Mahar
Miss Foster.....Jo Van Fleet
Capt. Fleure.....John Rodney
Freund.....Paul Mann
Bronson.....Don Keefer
Ghoulos.....Joseph Anthony
Policemen.....Leon Bibb and Randolph Echols
Lipton.....Fred Stewart

New York Herald Tribune

March 19, 1952

'Flight Into Egypt'

By WALTER F. KERR

In "Flight Into Egypt," which opened at the Music Box Tuesday night, George Tabori has written with agonizing honesty of the plight of the refugee. He has drawn searing scenes of the spiritual and even the physical suffering of the homeless, the eternally wandering, the despairing seekers after new life.

Elia Kazan, directing his first Broadway play since "Death of a Salesman," has cut deep beneath the surface bravado, the hollow optimism, of Tabori's tortured people. He has found every hidden nerve, rubbed it raw, then set it flaring into cruel and violent life upon the stage.

There is integrity, accuracy, and a no-compromise kind of drive in "Flight Into Egypt's" every moment. Yet, for all its dignity, and for all the harrowing intensity with which it is played by Paul Lukas and Gusti Huber, this reviewer found himself curiously unmoved. There is a point at which one becomes deadened to pain, and Mr. Tabori's carefully recorded catalogue of wretchedness is so relentless, so unrelieved, and so without final exaltation to give it meaning that one becomes inured to its crescendo of emotional shocks.

It is one thing to suffer with a tragic hero, who has brought his doom upon himself, and another to share those shattering violations of the human spirit which are undeserved. Franz Engel, Mr. Tabori's principal figure, is a man who means well. He has run from his native Vienna to escape "the smallness, the oldness and the guns." He is seeking America, a memorized volume of Whitman under his arm, and he means to be a proud and decent citizen when he gets there.

For six years he has fought his way blindly about Europe, always awaiting a visa. At the moment he is caught, strapped to a wheelchair, in a seedy melting-pot hotel in Cairo, where corrupt police, hard-shelled profiteers, and bustling but skeptical American consulate officials are thwarting his plans and draining away his courage. To pay the bills, his courageous wife is willing to work, to beg, and finally to give herself to a hump-backed local doctor.

When the visa does come, it is too late. Engel is a permanent cripple, he has learned of his wife's degredation, his son is about to be taken from him. As the curtain falls, he quietly kills himself.

It has not been the author's intention to wantonly pile misery upon misery, without special meaning. He states his point of view early: that here is no home for the refugee but home, no valid direction for him to take but that which takes him back to his origins. The voluntary exile, wherever he goes, will find himself defeated and destroyed. But this is not what Mr. Tabori has dramatized. The evils which pursue his people are not those which they meet in the new society of their dreams. They are incidental evils, picked up en route, sometimes invented out of whole cloth: an erratically venomous woman who refuses to pay for a dress the hard-working wife has made for her; a bitterly licentious French officer; a venal hotel-keeper who taunts Engel about his wife's infidelity for purely mercenary reasons.

These incidents do not describe the actual outlines of Tabori's thought, his dramatic intention. What he does have to say is introduced, on the sidelines of the action, by an expository character—an Austrian who still loves Austria—and who has been brought into the play only as spokesman for the author. The theme is developed without reference, or dramatic relationship, to the play's principal victim. It never does become a precise struggle in the mind and heart of Franz Engel, and Engel's pain is left to seem gratuitous, unjust, and eventually arid.

Paul Lukas plays Engel with great personal power. When he steels himself to prove that he can actually walk, when he listens to the simple, blunt, and heart-rending confession of his wife, and when he clasps his son to him in a final understanding embrace, he invests the part with the full dimensions of a man.

Lukas is never sentimental in his playing. Neither is Gusti Huber, as his wife, not even when she is reminiscing of her early married life and the past joys she has known. And when, at the end of the first act, she screams out to God for a thick hide and all the pity He can spare, she is thrilling.

Kazan has directed the company for constant and sometimes unendurable tension. He has drawn especially fine performances from Joseph Anthony, as a deformed doctor who is humiliated when he must beg for love; from Don Keefer, as a bustling, self-important consulate member who cheerfully announces that he is "just a rubber stamp"; and from twelve-year-old Voytek Dolinski as the spindly, cocky son who has begun to grow skeptical of his father. Zero Mostel, John Rodney and Paul Mann also contribute helpfully incisive performances.

Jo Mielziner has designed a fluid setting which embraces the long, receding arches of a hotel lobby, a section of the hotel bar, and the shabby interior of the Engels' room. The evening abounds in atmosphere, all of it striking.

At one point in "Flight Into Egypt" a character taunts the play's dying hero by saying: "With all this agony you could build a cathedral." It is difficult to escape the feeling that, with all this agony, we should have been rewarded with a more profoundly moving play.

The New York Times

March 19, 1952

AT THE THEATRE

By BROOKS ATKINSON

George Tabori's theme deserves an epochal drama. In "Flight Into Egypt," which was put on at the Music Box last evening, he is describing the anguish of European refugees who are trying to make their way to America. Although the facts are harrowing, Mr. Tabori has related them without dramatizing them much. In one theatregoer's opinion "Flight Into Egypt" is a play with several great moments, particularly in the second act, and with some memorable acting, too. But the playwriting as a whole is too trifling for such a momentous theme.

* * *

It is the story of an Austrian family who have been waiting in Cairo for visas to America. As his legacy from a concentration camp, Franz Engel is a cripple in a wheel-chair. His wife, Lili, tries to keep everything moving—tries to find money to pay the bills, tries to keep up her husband's spirits, tries to preserve their boy's decent nature. Finally the visas arrive. But Franz cannot pass the medical examination. To release his wife and his son from an impediment that will always keep them from America, Franz takes a fatal dose of poison in the last scene.

Thanks partly to Gusti Huber, who plays the wife, and to Paul Lukas, who plays the father, "Flight Into Egypt" contains some scenes that communicate the full hope and passion of the theme. Miss Huber, who has an extraordinarily long part, brings a grave, sensitive beauty to the character and describes with rare perception the excitement and the pain of a woman whose responsibilities are beyond human strength. The part is cluttered, but Miss Huber's acting is clear-minded and moving.

* * *

As the father, Mr. Lukas has his great scene in the second act when, to convince the American consul's doctor, he discards the wheel-chair, struggles to walk across the room and beguiles everyone with a vivid anecdote about the concentration camp. Mr. Lukas manages to pack into this scene the terrible longing of a man who has suffered in Europe and imagines that America will free him from everything. An intelligent and powerful actor with perfect taste, Mr. Lukas plays the scene triumphantly.

There is no use complaining that a great deal of the material in "Flight Into Egypt" is banal and commonplace. Mr. Tabori is intimately acquainted with the problems, crises and attitudes of the refugees, and no doubt has adhered to the truth. The truth can be disenchantingly commonplace on most occasions.

But granted that he is adhering to the truth, much of "Flight Into Egypt" is a thin and generalized narrative. It does not establish the background of the chief characters until the play is well along. It skips from one anecdote to another impulsively, and leaves a good deal of the drama at loose ends. Mr. Tabori has so much material at his finger tips that he gives an impression of not having time enough to get beneath the surface into the drama of the theme.

Jo Mielziner has provided a set that captures vividly the decayed, hopeless splendor of a Cairo hotel, and the lighting is wonderful. Although Elia Kazan's direction is forceful and ingenious, the play appears now and then to elude him. The play and the direction are not the best of friends.

In addition to Miss Huber and Mr. Lukas, individual actors bring a lot of belief and variety to the performance. Paul Mann's friendly, patriotic Austrian who does not believe in deserting the homeland; Joseph Anthony's tormented, cynical physician; Zero Mostel's heartless, though plausible hotel keeper; John Rodney's harsh and scornful French soldier; and especially, Voytek Dolinski's wayward, impudent, though courageous son of the Engels—are solid contributions to the color and impact of the play.

Out of respect for the theme and the appealing episodes that are in the play, it would be pleasant to accept "Flight Into Egypt" without reservations. But Mr. Tabori has not really mastered the theme, although obviously he knows a great deal about it.

Daily Mirror

March 19, 1952

'Flight Into Egypt' Attains A Stunning Effect

By ROBERT COLEMAN

"Flight Into Egypt" begins slowly, but gains pace, suspense and dramatic power as it proceeds. The play by George Tabori, based on one of his short stories, has to do with the plight of an Austrian family that wants to get to America. Mother, father and son journey from city to city, hoping to find a sympathetic consul.

For the husband has progressive paralysis. After a stay in Cairo, Egypt, during which the hopefuls undergo hardship and humiliation, the precious visas are forthcoming. But unfortunately a medical examination makes it certain that Franz Engel cannot be admitted to the U.S. So he takes poison, in order to free his loyal wife and son so that they may find peace and security in the new world.

The script boasts some of the most disagreeable characters to stalk a stage since "A Streetcar Named Desire." A merciless hotel proprietor, a lecherous physician, a venal policeman, a callous soldier bound for the Orient and a heartless social butterfly do everything they can to harass betray, and discourage the Engels.

It was quite a spell before we could begin to develop sympathy for any one, even the valiant and put-upon Mrs. Engel. But as the evening moved toward a climax, Tabori managed to bring sufficient decency to some of his tough characters. He managed to stir the emotions when the chips were really down.

Like "Streetcar," which Irene Mayer Selznick also produced, "Flight Into Egypt" is a sometimes hard and often harrowing drama. And, under Elia Kazan's direction, it evokes mood and atmosphere. The Glubb Hotel is a dirty and dismal place, but it grows on you. It eventually becomes an absorbing hell-hole, thanks in part in Mielziner's wonderful setting and Anna Hill Johnstone's realistic costumes.

A Viennese actress named Gusti Huber plays the gallant and tormented wife with a cumulative effect that is stunning. She achieves depth and enormous emotional impact without violating the cannons of restrained acting that audiences like over here. It was an auspicious American debut, indeed.

Paul Lukas has some fine, touching moments as the ailing husband, notably in the second act. Joseph Anthony, Paul Mann, Zero Mostel, David Opatoshu, Jo Van Fleet, Don Keefer, John Rodney and Fred Stewart are excellent in other roles. Young Voytek Dolinski etches a fascinating portrait of a spoiled, undisciplined, repellent little boy. He really makes the kid a monster, at least in the beginning.

"Flight Into Egypt" has its flaws. It is something less than a perfect play. It works up steam slowly. But when it explodes, it does so with a resounding bang. It eventually rewards patience. Its virtures outnumber its defects. Its high spots make it well worth seeing. And you will not soon forget it. As we left the Music Box Theatre, most of the first-nighters were on their feet cheering. Their robust applause was well deserved.

Journal American

March 19, 1952

Drama of Refugees Grows to High Climax

By JOHN McCLAIN

Irene Mayer Selznick, relatively a newcomer to the theatrical business, has thus far been batting 1.000 with her first two shows, "Streetcar Named Desire" and "Bell, Book and Candle." Last night, at the Music Box Theatre, she unveiled her third, "Flight Into Egypt," and it is my opinion that she has squeaked by to keep her average intact.

Despite the notable efforts of Elia Kazan, who is listed as co-producer and director, and the competence of Paul Lukas and a new Viennese import entitled Gusti Huber in the leads, it took quite a long time for "Flight" to get off the ground.

But when it did, somewhere around the middle of the evening, it proved to be sturdily airborne and remained thus until it descended with the final curtain in a provocative finale. I would therefore rate it a hit.

Premise Debated

My minor impatience with George Tabori's story is that his premise leaves something to be desired. Paul Lukas and his wife, Gusti Huber, and their small son, have in the year 1949 decided to desert Vienna and come to the United States. Lukas has had his business bombed out and is himself hopelessly crippled as the result of an injury suffered in a concentration camp.

Now, after two years of futile traveling in quest of a U. S. visa, they finally find themselves in a creepy Cairo hotel with almost no funds and the coveted entry permit within easy reach.

There is a disreputable doctor and a gay French captain who

would solve the financial problem for a hunk of Miss Huber's affection. And there is another fugitive from Vienna, played by Paul Mann, who entreats them to return and lend their efforts to rebuild the old world.

I found myself rather agreeing with him when he asked why anybody who was so obviously in love with his birthplace had chosen, in 1949, to pass it up in favor of a new country and a foreign tongue. Especially a cripple with little chance of survival.

But at this point a series of fresh and compelling incidents enter the proceedings and one is inclined to forget the preliminaries and go along with the situation as it stands. Here the play takes off and sustains itself resolutely to the climax. There is a memorable scene in which Mr. Lukas, right or wrong, leaves his wheel chair and shuffles helplessly around the room in a vain endeavor to convince the American officials that he is worthy of a visa.

Actor of Depth

Mr. Lukas's contribution in this and other moments establishes him once again as a serious actor of depth and diversity and he is immeasurably aided by Miss Huber, volatile blonde strangely reminiscent of a more strenuous Lilli Palmer. Voytek Dolinski, who plays the boy, is of course superb. Aren't there any BAD child actors?

Mr. Kazan has maneuvered all the other entirely immaculate performers with his usual pace and movement, and Jo Mielziner's single set suggests the proper amount of heat and squalor contingent with the mood.

Mr. Tabori, the author of this new play, is eloquent and profound. I think he has a success here, but I think he'll say it better and within a larger perimeter at a later date.

New York Post

March 19, 1952

By Richard Watts Jr.

Tragedy of the European Refugees

George Tabori's "Flight Into Egypt," which opened at the Music Box last night, is a tormented and tormenting play about the plight of the uprooted refugees of Central Europe. Because, seven years after the victorious ending of the Second World War, its subject matter remains one of the great, unresolved and characteristic tragedies of our time, Mr. Tabori's grim story of an Austrian family striving to escape from the sordid horrors of Cairo to the haven of America has an arresting quality in the theater that is not to be ignored. But there is also something gravely amiss in its emotional and intellectual impact.

It is not, I think, the fault of its production or of its acting. Elia Kazan has staged the play vigorously and alertly, against the vivid background of Jo Mielziner's excellent setting of a cheap Egyptian hotel. There is enough atmosphere to be dramatically believable, but not so much as to clutter things up with an excess of detail. There is likewise an expertly selected cast, with Gusti Huber, a young Viennese actress, playing the courageous wife of the family movingly and Paul Lukas appearing effectively as the crippled and desperate husband. The secondary roles are managed with both skill and insight.

Nevertheless, while "Flight Into Egypt" is almost invariably effective enough theatrically to hold one's interest, it but rarely captures the deeply harrowing emotional power that its theme calls for. It is my impression that one reason for this is a certain lack of resolution in the viewpoint of the narrative. For a great part of the time, it seems to be the tragedy of the Engels, the protagonists of the play, that poverty, diplomatic red tape and the serious ailment of the father make it impossible for them to elude the venality and persecution of their ruthless Egyptian hosts and reach the dreamed-of goal of America.

This, however, is only part of what the playwright has to say. He is also proclaiming with passion and intensity that physical escape is not the real solution for such people as the Engels. The very fact of being uprooted, he says, is the essence of their tragedy, and, instead of seeking sanctuary in another country, it is their duty to get back to their native land and help make it the place of their dreams. It is an interesting point to make, and Mr. Tabori sets it down eloquently, but I can't help thinking that his play suffers from the fact that it seems to shift back and forth uncertainly between the two issues.

There is also, it seems to me, an occasional weakness in the character drawing, although not in the acting of the characters. The bitter resentfulness of the husband at the wife's despairing efforts to save him is certainly explained by his helplessness, but there are times when he is made to appear more petulant than tragic. The role of a young Austrian, who pleads with the Engels to return to Vienna, is admirably written, and so is the part of a helpless and well-meaning American diplomat, but there is too much vagueness in the otherwise interesting character of a dubious doctor.

As I have said, Miss Huber is sincere and moving as the wife, and Mr. Lukas has the right quality for the doomed husband. Don Keefer's playing of the young diplomat is remarkable for its complete rightness, and Paul Mann as the friendly Austrian, Joseph Anthony as the sinister physician, Voytek Dolinski as the son, David Opatoshu as a corrupt policeman, Zero Mostel as an evil hotel keeper, John Rodney as a lecherous French soldier and Fred Williams as a sympathetic servant, are particularly helpful. There is much that is striking and vivid in "Flight Into Egypt," but its final effect is oddly disappointing.

DAILY NEWS

March 19, 1952

Gusti Huber a Notable Actress In Admirable 'Flight Into Egypt'

By JOHN CHAPMAN

"Flight into Egypt," by George Tabori, an English novelist, is a wonderful piece of theatre at the Music Box, but I am not sure about it as a play. As a play, it is about a man, wife and small son sitting around in Cairo waiting for refugees' visas to the U. S., and I can't quite figure whether Tabori really wants them to come here or to go back to where they came from, which is Vienna. The piece is, therefore, dramatically indecisive; but as theatre it is exciting, thanks to a notable performance by Gusti Huber and excellent acting by Paul Lukas, splendid direction by Elia Kazan and a marvelous set by Jo Mielziner.

Irene Mayer Selznick gave "Flight Into Egypt" a blue-ribbon production last evening, and the first audience was quick to appreciate the fine playing of an extraordinarily well-organized company. Miss Huber, a Viennese making her American debut, captures this season's acting honors with her performance of a wife and mother who goes to enormous lengths to keep her family together and try to move it to America. Lukas is entirely admirable as her husband, a war-wounded cripple whose ill-health bars the granting of the visa.

A Great Setting.

The play is a tragedy and it is therefore inevitable that Lukas kills himself in order that his wife and son may continue their journey toward a new freedom. But Tabori, the playwright, does not seem to think that this journey is imperative; he strongly suggests that the mother and the son, if left to themselves and not being driven by the urge of the father, would rather go back home. This dampens the dramatic urge and the progress of the play.

But a play it is, urgent or not. In Mielziner's great setting of a low-class hotel in Cairo, Kazan's actors make the Music Box what a theatre should be—a theatre. Miss Huber's performance of a desperate woman is heart-wrenching, and Lukas' portrait of her invalid husband is a just reward for his patience in playing a colorless role in the musical, "Call Me Madam." Another newcomer to the stage and to this country, 12-year-old Voytek Dolinski, is very fine as the boy.

Kazan has made actors of all his people. Zero Mostel, the noisy, mugging comedian of night clubs, is surprisingly good in the straight role of a callous, greedy Egyptian hotel proprietor, and there is other good work by Paul Mann, Joseph Anthony, David Opatoshu, John Rodney, Don Keefer and Jo Van Fleet. It is a great pleasure to see a stage being used as a stage, so I recommend "Flight Into Egypt" and commend all those who have worked on it and in it.

"Golden Boy"

The New York Times

March 13, 1952

AT THE THEATRE

By BROOKS ATKINSON

"Golden Boy" is just as penetrating as it ever was. Perhaps the performance is even more overwhelming. For Mr. Odets has directed the revival of his own play, which opened at the ANTA Playhouse last evening, and the acting is superb. Most of the players are old Group Theatre graduates, working again at one of their most memorable triumphs. For them, as well as for the public, the revival is worth-while. Mr. Odets never has said anything more pertinent and the Group actors have never worked at anything more valid or decisive.

* * *

This is the drama, period of 1937, in which the young Italian violinist makes a killing as a prize-fighter and destroys everything decent in life. Although Joe is a promising musician, he wants fame and money at once. He switches to the prize-ring and beats his way to the top. His success is sensational. But it is the success of destruction. He breaks his hands. He kills his biggest opponent. Finally he kills himself and the girl he loves in a wild automobile ride.

Although "Golden Boy" is a powerful drama, it never sacrifices integrity for showmanship. The choice Mr. Odets presses on his hero is discerning and honest, and the ethic of the play is high-minded. On the one hand is music, which is a creative gift that enriches everyone; on the other hand, prize-fighting, which is savage and destructive. The choice Mr. Odets' hero makes is fundamental, and it goes down through the whole core of civilized life.

* * *

There are some Odetsian mannerisms scattered through "Golden Boy." For example, his love scenes are like quarrels. When his boys and girls are in the mating mood, they scream at each other and say things that are cruel. And on the fringes of the play Mr. Odets introduces a crumpled philosopher who quotes Schopenhauer—straight out of the cluttered emotionalism of "Awake and Sing."

These are ingratiating mannerisms that probably represent Mr. Odets' own tensions, which are the source of his strength as a writer. And they never whittle anything off the sturdy frame-work of "Golden Boy," nor do they weaken the power of his drama.

The performance is wonderfully mature. Paul Morrison has designed a suit of settings that capture the leisurely hospitality of the father's home, the cheapness of the fight manager's office and the grimness of a dressing room beneath the prizefight arena. Probably Mr. Odets would not need so much scenery today, but Mr. Morrison has solved the problem of multitudinous changes.

* * *

Under Mr. Odets' direction the performance has coherence, solidity and pace; and it has brought the best out of the actors. Lee Cobb's kindly, sorrowing, courageous father; John Garfield's bombastic, nervous, callous prizefighter; Art Smith's shallow but human manager; Joseph Wiseman's catlike gangster with unctuous manners—are stunning performances that are also true.

But the other parts are also admirably acted. Bette Grayson's portrait of the manager's girl is the best and most discerning performance that she has given. And William Hansen's quiet, knowing trainer introduces a soft note that is welcome in this hard drama. Rudy Bond's bellowing and bullying manager's partner is also a first-rate bit of character acting.

Everyone is on his toes in this prize-fighting drama. And Mr. Odets first of all: He picked the theme out of the frustrations of modern life. He designed it and wrote it. And despite its violence, "Golden Boy" speaks a thoughtful word for the truth of human relationships.

"GOLDEN BOY"

Play by Clifford Odets; staged by Mr. Odets; scenery by Paul Morrison; revived by the American National Theatre and Academy at the ANTA Playhouse, March 12, 1952. The cast:

Tom Moody	Art Smith
Lorna Moon	Bette Brayson
Joe Bonaparte	John Garfield
Tokio	William Hansen
Mr. Carp	Martin Greene
Siggie	Michael Lewin
Mr. Bonaparte	Lee J. Cobb
Anna	Peggy Meredith
Frank Bonaparte	Jack Klugman
Roxy Gottlieb	Rudy Bond
Eddie Fuseli	Joseph Wiseman
Pepper White	Arthur O'Connell
Mickey	Jack Warden
Call Boy	Sidney Kay
Sam	Gerald S. O'Loughlin
Lewis	Norman Brooks
Drake	Joe Bernard
Driscoll	Bert Conway
Barker	Tony Kraber

New York World-Telegram and The Sun

March 13, 1952

Odets' 'Golden Boy' Is Revived

By WILLIAM HAWKINS.

The ANTA Subscription Series has the most agreeable and interested premiere audience in town, and last night it gave a warm reception to the revival of "Golden Boy," Clifford Odets' drama of 15 years ago.

This is a white-hot play, spare and finely constructed, which does not get the full treatment in its present production. Compressed rehearsals and nerves may be at fault in part, but the author's direction does not lead the actors via the happiest paths to the play's climaxes.

One departing lady said last night at the end of the show, "Even if you think you don't care about what's going on up there, you sit on the edge of your seat all evening."

Taut With Conflicts.

The drama holds you all right. You may remember that Odets has told of a conflict between the integrity a certain young man can have with the music he loves and the fatal glory he pursues as a boxer, at the expense of his violin.

The plays builds neatly, always taut with conflicts. The older fight manager sets his girl after the fighter, to make the boy forget his musical hands and really fight. Inevitably the girl and boy fall in love.

Through the play runs the quiet, dominant figure of the boy's father, who has bought him a valuable fiddle just as he decides to turn fighter. There is further tension in the rivalry between the old manager and a gangster with personal interest in the boy.

The young boxer grows more ruthless and brutal until a fatal accident in the ring sends him off to his finish.

Weighed by Words.

The play rolls along with great believability, despite the fact that in this production the spans of action are more effective than the peaks. Over and over, when the narrative comes to a head in violent thought or major decision, the actors seem suddenly to have more words to say than they can comfortably manage. They race glibly for the curtain, and it takes a few seconds' thought for you to absorb just what has happened. The actors have unequal success with their roles. Lee J. Cobb has a masterly grip on the role of the father. Often he dominates the scene as surely as a roof on a house, with nothing at all to say.

John Garfield seemed to me often too anxious entirely to convince in the title role. He has the tension for it certainly, but it is wound too tight too early. He achieves the boy's violent nature, but never so surely projects his confusion.

A Thousand Years Old?

Bette Grayson looks handsome and conveys the thought that she feels 1000 years old as the girl, but there are complicated facets of the character that seem not yet explored.

William Hansen plays a trainer with flashes of such vivid, quiet honesty that they often pull the whole play into a complete sense of reality.

Art Smith has fine moments as the manager, though he is sometimes insecure with lines, and Joseph Wiseman, in the showy part of the gangster, is theatrically effective, even if he succumbs to the temptation of occasional solo flights during which the other actors might as well be offstage.

In smaller roles the cast is well supported. The comedy seems excellently melded in the hands of Rudy Bond, Michael Lewin, Peggy Meredith and Arthur O'Connell.

Journal American

March 13, 1952

Some Bright Scenes But Not a Great Play

By JOHN McCLAIN

To the long list of this season's revivals you can add "Golden Boy," by Clifford Odets, an ANTA production which opened at their Playhouse last night, with John Garfield and Lee J. Cobb sharing top billing.

It has moments of high excitement and humor and many of the individual scenes sparkle and burn brightly, but the cumulative effort does not, in my opinion, result in an entirely bountiful evening for the playgoer.

Maybe we've had other and more plausible efforts along the same lines since the play first reached Broadway back in 1937, or maybe the efforts haven't been any better, or as good, but the fact remains that the problems of a prize fighter have been kicked around by the movies, radio and television until everybody's slightly slap-happy.

That isn't to say a great drama can't still be ground from these ingredients; I only say I don't think this is it.

* * *

Picks Prize Ring

You may recall from the original play or the subsequent motion picture that "Golden Boy" involves a young Italian-American who throws over a chance to become a violinist in favor of the prize ring, where he sees a chance to make a fast dollar. There is a girl, of course—his manager's mistress.

She is projected into the proceedings to lure the kid into fighting with the proper disregard for his hands, which he hopes one day to employ less painfully in his musical career.

But he falls in love with the girl and harkens to the tinkle of the cash drawer and the roar of the crowd. What if he breaks his hand, as long as he has hers?

This sort of thing is sure to lead to disaster, which it promptly does. They split and then they get together and finally, in his moment of triumph, the world collapses at everybody's feet.

My personal peeve with the story is that I was never convinced the boy was going to be a new Heifitz in the first place, so what's so terrible if he goes out and makes $700,000 at the expense of a swollen knuckle?

* * *

I also was bewildered by some of the characters. Around the fight business I don't know anybody resembling Tokio, the gently philosophic trainer; or Eddie Fusell, the elegant and hysterical gangster. In fact, I never knew a fighter who was saving his hands for Handel.

Apart from the play itself I thought John Garfield turned in a forceful and generally credible performance as the fighter, and Lee J. Cobb, as his father, succeeded at times in getting me aroused to the great problem of what to do with resin. If your boy is going to put it on his feet or on his violin bow?

The girl, played by Bette Grayson, was entirely believable and so was Art Smith as the manager.

Joseph Wiseman behaved like no gangster living or dead, although we've learned a lot about such characters since the play was first written. The rest of the cast, too long to mention, was uniformly competent and the sets and costumes by Paul Morrison were practical and effective.

I would like to be able to say as much for the entire proceedings.

New York Post

March 13, 1952

By Richard Watts Jr.

A Fine Revival of an Odets Play

Clifford Odets' celebrated "Golden Boy" holds up splendidly in its revival at the ANTA Playhouse. Indeed, I admired it more last night than I did when I first saw and reviewed its original production in 1937. At that time, its rather conventional story of the rise and fall of a young prizefighter stood in the way of my enjoyment through its excessive fidelity to a highly formalized plot structure. But I now find myself able to accept and pass over its conventionality and concentrate on its enormous virtues of characterization, dialogue, intensity of feeling, and straight dramatic drive, which seem to me to have grown in interest.

For one thing, there is no one in the American theater today who writes such crisply powerful dialogue, with its curiously characteristic combination of colloquial realism and simple, imaginative prose-poetry, and that goes for Mr. Odets. For, as good as the playwright's "The Country Girl" seemed to me last season, its talk lacked something of the zest, the raciness, and the naturalistic lyricism that give "Golden Boy" its individuality and distinction even in the midst of the routine aspects of its story line. There is a kind of passionate feeling about mankind in the pre-war play that remains moving and significant.

Matter of Plot

Even if you are coming on "Golden Boy" for the first time and aren't prepared for it by attendance at so many motion pictures on the same subject, I don't imagine it will take many scenes before you can predict what the action is going to involve. What is important is that this no longer seems to matter. It isn't the story that is important any more. Even the characters are, in outline, fairly conventional, from the boy who wanted to be a violinist and his idealistic old father to the girl tramp with the heart of gold and the hangers-on of the prize ring. It is what Mr. Odets does with familiar material that counts.

It still is my impression that the play is more striking when it deals with the family of Joe Bonaparte, the young fighter-violinist, than when it goes in for the melodrama of the ring. But always the people of the narrative are alive and throbbing with authentic emotions, and always they express themselves in talk that is wonderfully vital and pungent. Furthermore, the dramatist can usually be found approaching even his most familiar figures and events with at least a hint of freshness and originality. You can believe in all the men and women in "Golden Boy" and that is rare in the contemporary drama.

John Garfield

In at least one other important way, the revival seems to me more effective than I recall it from 1937, and that is in the playing of the title role. Luther Adler was, in general, quite good in the original company as the tortured young fighter, but he wasn't nearly as real, incisive or moving as John Garfield is in the present production. Indeed, this strikes me as one of the finest performances that I have ever seen Mr. Garfield give, and it serves to remind us once more that, provided with the proper sort of role, he is one of the most brilliant and satisfying of American actors.

All of the other performances are excellent, also, even though Joseph Wiseman, while properly sinister, is a little too mannered as the gangster who takes over young Bonaparte. Bette Grayson, an increasingly skillful young actress, is particularly good as the soiled heroine, giving a deeply moving honesty to the most conventional of the roles. Lee J. Cobb as the father, Art Smith as the manager, William Hansen as the sympathetic trainer, Michael Lewin as the taxi-driving son-in-law, and Arthur O'Connell as a preliminary fighter, are especially helpful members of an excellent cast. ANTA producer Robert Whitehead has again come forward with a first-rate production of a striking play.